ED 393 297   FL 023 576

AUTHOR   Mosher, Joyce Devlin
TITLE   When English Is the Foreign Language.
PUB DATE   95
NOTE   35p.
PUB TYPE   Viewpoints (Opinion/Position Papers, Essays, etc.)
                (120) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides
                (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   Class Activities; Curriculum Guides; *English (Second
                Language); *Intercultural Communication; Lesson
                Plans; Multilingualism; Needs Assessment; *Second
                Language Instruction; Second Language Learning;
                Student Needs; *Student Participation; Teacher
                Education; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS   *Content Area Teaching

ABSTRACT
                This document, divided in two parts, provides a
review of current methods of second language acquisition, offers a
step-by-step teaching methodology for effective communication in
multilingual settings, and helps teachers develop strategies for
integrating language and content instruction in the
English-as-a-Second-Language classroom. The guide suggests that
second language teachers should communicate, facilitate
socialization, and provide language instruction. With these goals in
mind and aimed directly at the teacher, this teacher's guide outlines
and defines how to assess the child, communicate participation
structures, present appropriate content material, and encourage
second language practice. Both school and home environments are
discussed. Ideas presented address the adjustments that students and
teachers can make to create a learning environment in which language
learners can participate as active learners. (Contains 14
references.) (NAV)

When English is the Foreign Language

by

Joyce Devlin Mosher

Research Paper and Teacher Training Manual

ED 393 297

Multicultural, multilingual classrooms can be settings for dynamic, interactional

learning experiences in which all students and teachers become adept at

intercultural communication.

Because of current immigration trends, an increasing number of students

have to master content material in a language that they are still in the process of

learning. Teachers find themselves, regardless of the subject they teach, in the

new role of language instructors. At the very least, every classroom teacher

serves as a model of the American language and a purveyor of American

culture, and many take a much more active role in helping students learn

English. Public and private elementary and secondary school teachers, no less

than university professors, feel the need to stay current in second language

acquisition theory and language instruction methods in order to become skilled intercultural communicators.

Teachers can meet the challenge of providing education to culturally and linguistically diverse students by applying successful methods of second language instruction across the entire curriculum. When teachers accommodate language learning in all content classes, they maximize the benefits of classroom diversity and create a supportive environment for the academic achievement and social development of all students. Classrooms become places where teachers and students develop interpersonal skills that are increasingly necessary in our pluralistic society. Moreover, for teachers of foreign languages to monolingual English-speaking students, the limited English proficiency student population can be an especially valuable educational resource.

To be effective, language instruction methods must acknowledge the importance of the individual learner. Language acquisition is influenced by a variety of interrelated factors. Language instructors must be familiar with the learner's personality, culture, cognitive style, and prior knowledge. Each of these factors influences language proficiency and acculturation to the new language group. These factors also influence each other. Personality encompasses age, gender, personal appearance, self-image, and the whole range of human emotions. Culture is the learner's collective identity, the blueprint for the student's thoughts, expressions, and social behavior thus far in

life. Cognitive style is a student's preferred mode of perception and system of organizing knowledge. Prior knowledge includes the level of literacy and previous scholastic experience in the first language, as well as what is known of the target language and the people who speak it. Although this is a brief sketch of the four factors, educators will recognize them as dynamic human characteristics that interact, change, and evolve during the second language learning period.

One-to-one tutoring is the most effective way to meet the needs of a student striving to learn English. Tutoring provides three advantages (Mosher 1). First, the learner is an active participant in the tasks at hand, and collaborates with the tutor toward a joint achievement. Second, the individual learner is the focus of the choice of materials and learning activities. Third, the face-to-face interaction of tutoring offers a safe, non-threatening atmosphere for the learner to practice manipulating a new set of oral, written, and nonverbal symbols. Classrooms of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds can adapt successful tutoring methods in several ways in order to accommodate language learning.

Given a motivated learner, individualized language instruction combined with all-English classroom immersion offer the student the best chance to succeed in the American education system (Short 10-11). Because it is important for the language learner to interact with native speakers of English at all phases of the acquisition process, classrooms must make such interaction

possible from the beginning. In classrooms where content is presented in ways that reflect an understanding of language learning, new students can begin to make progress in English and in content instruction. When they are encouraged to participate in classroom activities at their current proficiency levels, language learners are able to build vital performance skills. Three ways that teachers can accommodate language learning are to encourage language practice, to provide opportunities for socialization, and to make input more comprehensible to the language learner.

Encouraging language practice is the first and most important way to help limited English proficiency students adjust to classroom communication styles. Language learners cannot participate in classroom activities until they understand the various communication structures that are used. Figuring out who speaks when can be as challenging as comprehending what is said and knowing what to respond (Johnson 46). Classrooms utilize a variety of communication patterns, ranging from the highly formal structure of reciting memorized material before a silent audience, to the improvisational informality of a class discussion in which students can speak out freely in any order. A language learner will often miss the nonverbal and spoken cues that signal the end of one communication structure and the beginning of the next.

A simple remedy for this confusion about who speaks when is for the teacher or a student to announce the lesson's objectives, activities, and participation rules, preferably by legibly writing them on the board and reading

them. When language learners are made aware of the communication structure currently being used, they have a better chance of being able to participate; certainly they comprehend more of what is taking place. By making explicit who speaks when, all students, including fully proficient English-speaking students, have a better focus on the current activity.

Another way to encourage classroom participation during the early learning stages is to adapt assignments to the learners' abilities. For example, when writing skills are rudimentary, students can dictate their contribution to a class discussion, while an advanced student writes the dictated comments on the board. Together the class edits these comments and continues the discussion. In this way, language learners practice new vocabulary and speaking skills in the meaningful context of the classroom.

The second means of accommodating language learning is to encourage socialization. A non-critical, supportive classroom is an ideal environment to acquire new language skills. Without exposing language learners to solo tasks that are beyond their capabilities, teachers can find many occasions to make language learners part of the group. Peer tutoring and cooperative learning formats are excellent alternatives to a traditional teaching style (Holt et al. 1-3). Teams and group work provide opportunities to integrate language learning with content instruction to students of various levels of proficiency in oral, writing, and general educational skills. Limited English proficiency students benefit from observing learning strategies used by their peers (Cochran 3). Face-to-face

verbal interactions that occur in student groups of two to six promote

communication that is natural and meaningful, and foster respect and friendship

among heterogeneous groups of students.

Finally, classroom teachers and students can develop strategies and

techniques that make the content input more comprehensible to limited English

proficient students. Such strategies and techniques represent valuable practice

of intercultural communication skills for teachers and students and also invite

more participation from the language learner. An effective strategy is to identify

key terms and words, and to use the spellings and definitions of this key

vocabulary as an introduction to new material. Companion to previews and

highlights of the current lesson's vocabulary are frequent summations of the

salient points as the lesson progresses. In a student-centered learning

approach, students rather than the teacher can be responsible for these

vocabulary lists and summations.

Besides such basic strategies that render content input more

comprehensible, there are other general instructional techniques that work well

with a diverse student body. One technique is to adjust and modify materials to

the student's current level of ability. Simplifying communication and adapting

assignments enable language learners to contribute to the successful

completion of learning tasks in the early stages of speech production. Another

technique is to vary the presentation of information. With an awareness of

students' different learning and communication styles, teachers can use different

modes of instruction to address the wide variety of needs. A third technique is to integrate the teaching of study skills along with content material. Visual representations of new material help the language learner to organize new information. Outlines, timelines, graphs, charts, and Venn Diagrams are all study aids that promote language learning along with content instruction.

Integrating language learning with content learning is the goal of all the strategies discussed here. When classroom teachers and students modify language and materials, and language classes incorporate content material, limited English proficiency students can succeed academically at an earlier stage in the language acquisition process. Moreover, the cooperative, interactive, student-centered approach required when participants have varying degrees of proficiency enriches the school experience of all students and teachers.

The student population learning English represents an educational resource for language teachers. Teachers of foreign languages and monolingual English-speaking students have the opportunity to witness second language acquisition in action. Students of foreign languages get first-hand knowledge of the challenges of comprehending, speaking, reading, and writing a new language by interacting with students who are learning English. Language classes can use this first-hand knowledge to become aware of the stages of language acquisition, the types of errors that a language learner makes, and what kind of practice leads to better command of the new language.

This real-life experience of second language acquisition promotes an understanding of the cultural dimensions of language. English-speaking students learning a new language may discover that a person can change in many ways during the language acquisition process. Such experience of the cultural dimension has far-reaching educational applications, not only to the social sciences, but to the arts, humanities, and business studies as well.

The ideas presented here address the kinds of adjustments that students and teachers can make to create a learning environment in which language learners can participate. Creative, experienced teachers will further adapt and extend the ideas presented in the following Teacher Training Manual to make their own classrooms places where personal and academic growth results from student-to-student and student-to-teacher interaction. For language learners, such classrooms provide a meaningful context in which to learn and practice new verbal, writing, and social skills.

Works Cited

Cochran, Connie. "Strategies for Involving LEP Students in the All-English-Medium Classroom: A Cooperative Learning Approach." National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. Washington, Summer 1989.

Holt, Daniel D., Barbara Chips, and Diane Wallace. "Cooperative Learning in the Secondary School." National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. Washington, 1991.

Johnson, Karen E. Understanding Communication in Second Language Classrooms. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Mosher, Joyce. "One-to-One Tutoring: Effective Language Instruction." Unpublished manuscript. Regis University, 1995.

Short, Deborah J. "Integrating Language and Content Instruction: Strategies and Techniques." National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education. Washington, Fall 1991.

When English is the Foreign Language

*Intercultural Communication for Educators:
Strategies for Integrating Language Learning
and Content-area Instruction
in Multilingual Classrooms*

by Joyce Devlin Mosher

Private Language Tutor
Language and Literature Instructor, Colorado Mountain College

P.O. Box
Breckenridge, Colorado 80424
email: overlode@overlode.com
Phone: 970-453-2297

THE CLASSROOM AS MULTICULTURE CENTER

With students of diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, classrooms in American schools become multicultural settings in which some students are learning English along with mainstream course material. This global village promises rewarding educational opportunities for all students, but such enrichment depends on being able to communicate. -

Every classroom teacher is to some degree a language instructor. Every classroom teacher serves as a model of the American language and a purveyor of American culture. Beyond these basic roles, teachers often find themselves taking a decidedly active role in the English instruction of language minority students.

In order to fashion ways of accommodating language learning in classrooms, all teachers need to be adept at intercultural communication. This review of current methods of second language acquisition provides the background for effective communication in multilingual settings, and helps teachers develop strategies for integrating language and content instruction.

INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Regardless of the subject of study or the age of the students, teachers have a three-part task:

- To communicate: convey the content to be learned

- To facilitate socialization: help the student perceive the context, the social organization, and participation structures of the academic setting

- To provide language instruction: support the student's effort to keep improving in English

The accomplishment of these three tasks demands an understanding of the following four areas:

1. *ASSESSING*

2. *COMMUNICATING PARTICIPATION STRUCTURES*

3. *PRESENTING CONTENT MATERIAL*

4. *ENCOURAGING LANGUAGE PRACTICE*

1. ASSESSING

From the outset, beware of attributing less or more English ability to a new student than she or he possesses. Many students begin their American educational career with oral skills that are easily learned through the media and everyday conversation. This oral knowledge does not prepare them for academics, however, where the emphasis is on reading and writing.

Assess the four language skills separately.

Speaking may not reflect all of the grammar and vocabulary skills that the student actually has. Speaking lags behind comprehension. Take into account pronunciation difficulties.

Comprehending is the process of decoding verbal and nonverbal messages.

Reading strengthens the other three skills. Some students read better than they speak, while others are strong verbally but weak in literacy.

Writing brings in spelling and organizational skills, and is not a reliable guide to an assessment of the other language skills.

Know the individual.

Improve Error Analysis skills.

TO KNOW THE INDIVIDUAL:

There are four attributes of an individual that affect
second language acquisition. Each of these factors
influences language proficiency and acculturation to the
new language group. These factors also influence each
other. These four variable are dynamic human
characteristics that interact, change, and evolve during
the second language learning period.

PERSONALITY

CULTURE

FLUENCY AND ACCULTURATION

COGNITIVE STYLE

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

EVERY LEARNER HAS A UNIQUE PERSONALITY

- **Age**

Young learners, two through twelve years old, have certain advantages. At this age, sounds are easy to imitate and the hemispheres of the brain have not established dominance over certain tasks. Adolescent and adult learners have mature language skills already in place, have longer attention spans, and are capable of abstract, analytic thought.

- **Gender**
- **Personal appearance**
- **Self-image**
- **Whole range of human emotions**
- **Self-esteem** guides how one relates to others
- **Psychology**

    Extroverted or introverted

    Cooperative or competitive

- **The ability to imitate** and learn from those imitations. It is natural to be self-conscious when performing new verbal and nonverbal language, especially when it means presenting a new face to the world.

- **A Second identity accompanies a second language.** The unstable internal condition of culture shock reorients one's most basic thoughts and feelings. A person adapting to a new culture experiences many changes:

- **Physical** changes: climate, housing, living conditions
- **Biological** changes: food, health care
- **Cultural**: political, economic, linguistic
- **Social**: work, new social status as a member of a minority in a new country
- **Psychological**: behavior, mental health

CULTURE

Culture is the personal and collective identity that first formed the learner's ideas, beliefs, and customs. Language is imprinted with the values of the original culture. With a new language the student acquires a new set of values and outlooks.

Classroom behavior is culturally determined. Nonverbal communication reveals values, customs, and beliefs:

Eye contact
Self-disclosure habits
Willingness to ask questions or admit to not knowing something
Gestures
Facial expressions
Posture
Movement
Display of emotions
Touching
Personal attire
Vocal pitch, speed, and loudness
Proxemics, or the way people use space
Awareness of time
> **Monochronic** cultures are schedule-dominated.
> The people do one thing at a time.
> 2:00 means 2:00.
>
> **Polychronic** cultures are activities-dominated.
> The people do several things at once, in no particular order.
> 2:00 means sometime between 1:00 and 3:00, maybe.
> There are no straight lines at cinemas or shop counters.

COGNITIVE STYLE

Every individual has preferred modes of perception and systems of organizing knowledge. Teachers can offer students the chance to approach the new language by various means. Variation in the style of classroom activities gives learners the chance to use their most developed competences to strengthen the weaker ones.

The most widely recognized learning styles are:
> **Visual**
> **Auditory**
> **Tactile**
> **Kinesthetic**
> **Sensory**

> **4MAT®** wheel identifies innovative, analytical, common sense, and dynamic learners

> **Field-dependent** - perception that includes emotionality
> **Field-independent** - logic, linear and sequential frames
> **Reflectivity** - given a long time to think before responding
> **Impulsivity** - fast, accurate, correct answers
> **Relative tolerance of ambiguity**

Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences lists seven competences:

> **Linguistic** - strong communicative power
> **Logico-mathematical** - logical, scientific thought
> **Musical** - composing, performing, and appreciating
> **Spatial** - model makers, builders, sculptors, artists
> **Kinesthetic** - motor skills, tool-making, movement
> **Interpersonal** - cooperation
> **Intrapersonal** - self-knowledge, personal experience

18

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Every student begins with a certain level of literacy and previous scholastic experience, which affect the acquisition of a second language. Every student has some level of knowledge of the target language and culture. This knowledge includes the individual's attitude toward the language, the place where it is spoken, the people who speak it, and the culture of that group.

Alternation, or accommodation without assimilation, is an adaptation strategy whereby students adapt to life in the United States and at the same time maintain their own social and cultural identity. For many students, it is possible to learn English while still retaining the original language and culture.

Since there are no universal "norms" of classroom behavior, a student's prior knowledge of school acts as a built-in syllabus for behavior.

Some Taiwanese feel that only rude students speak in class; speaking in class is a way to draw attention to oneself and therefore taboo.

Some Japanese avoid eye contact when speaking to a person of higher status, for example, a teacher. Japanese students may have learned the mechanics of English grammar, translation, reading comprehension, and vocabulary, but their language studies probably did not use English as a written or spoken means of real-life communication.

Some Chinese think that if they listen quietly and take notes in class, they are participating. They are reluctant to raise questions or share ideas in group discussions.

Some Vietnamese fear and respect teachers, so they do not generally respond in class. They do not respect students who "show off" by participating orally in class.

Error Analysis Techniques

"THERE ARE NO MISTAKES; THERE ARE ONLY ATTEMPTS"

Students progress by trying to discover the underlying grammar rules and applying them in conversation. Errors represent learning strategies and reveal what parts of the language students need more practice in.

Local errors are small grammar errors that do not interfere with the speaker's intended meaning:
>"My sister is nurse"
>"I am used to get up early in the morning"

Global errors are covert errors that do interfere with the intended meaning; they can even be grammatical, but are nonsensical:
>"She was here for two years ago"
>"Many cities stopped walking"

Errors are made through addition, adding extra parts :
>"Does he can sing?"
>"What an awful weather"

Errors are made through omission, dropping parts:
>"My brother going to movie"
>"We stayed at Sheraton hotel"

Errors are made through substitution of vocabulary:
>"I lost my road"
>"He is a very alone man"

Word order
>"I will with them talk"
>"What she is doing?"

ALL ERRORS STEM FROM TWO MAIN CAUSES

Language One interference - the student translates literally from elements of the first language

> "I will see you when I will arrive"
> "He got married with a woman from Toulouse"

Experimenting with Language Two - between the source language (L1) and the target language (L2) lies the interlanguage, also called the approximative language (L3). This is a completely unstable learning stage, since the student is making continual improvement

Overgeneralization

> "Go to the Pine Street and turn left"
> "He coming at 5:00"

Production simplification

> "No make any difference"
> "My son like go school"

Inherent difficulty: Stressed syllables, pronunciation, spelling oddities, secondary dialects, and idioms

> "I'm broke"
> "My foot fell asleep"
> "I was just about to call you"

REMEMBER: They are not making mistakes; they're making progress!

2. COMMUNICATING PARTICIPATION STRUCTURES
"Who Talks When?"

> Your classroom is a unique communication context that combines language learning, content learning, and socialization opportunities for the limited English proficiency student. Classroom communication patterns rely on highly regulated behavior, most of which is culturally assumed and not explicitly taught. In order to do academic tasks, the student must have knowledge of the language and knowledge of the social organization and participation structures that are in effect.

Activities range from ritualized, formulaic speech events, such as recitations of memorized material by students and lectures or introduction of new material by the teacher, to **spontaneous events** in which there is no predetermined order or content and students are free to speak at any point in the lesson.

Following are four common classroom structures, all of which use a different set of interaction rules:

1. Teacher interacts with all students, controlling who talks when. Voluntary or compulsory participation.

2. Teacher interacts with small groups, requiring individual performance at a stated time in the process.

3. Students work individually at their desks, and the teacher is available for student-initiated interaction.

4. Students work in small groups and are responsible for completing a task, with indirect supervision by the teacher.

ONE CULTURAL FACTOR CAN INFLUENCE COMMUNICATION STYLE

'Individualism' here refers to the broad value tendencies of a culture to emphasize the importance of individual identity and rights over group identity and rights. High individualistic values have been found in the United States, Australia, Great Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, and New Zealand.

FEATURES OF INDIVIDUALISM:

- General rules apply equally to all situations
- Informality is the norm
- Relationships are short term and for a specific purpose
- Personal and public lives are kept separate
- Individual needs, desires, skills, and identity are valued
- Self-disclosure and self-explanation are valued
- Communication is linear and finite
- Emphasis is on how to formulate the best messages and improve delivery skills
- All meaning is in the message created by the sender
- Independence of individuals is assumed
- Materialism, success, progress, activity, and equality are valued
- The main function of communication is to actualize autonomy and self-fulfillment
- The main emphasis is on outcomes
- Speech is power; eloquence and self-assertion are valued; speech fills the void of silence.

Individualism results in a direct communication style, one that is clear, precise, and explicit. It is a low context style, since all the meaning resides in the words spoken.

'Collectivism' tends to emphasize group identity, obligations, and rights over those of the individual. High collectivistic values have been uncovered in Indonesia, Colombia, Venezuela, Panama, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan.

FEATURES OF COLLECTIVISM:

- Particular rules and interaction patterns are applied, depending on the relationship and context
- Formality is the norm
- Relationships are long-term
- The goal is to retain harmonious interpersonal relationships
- Personal and public lives overlap
- Communication is an infinite interpretive process, an ongoing activity
- The interdependence of all humanity is assumed
- Tradition, honor, duty, and social strata are valued
- The main function of communication is to initiate, develop, and maintain social relationships
- Silence is a shared, meaningful trait of communication in a culture that values reserve, formality, and "already knowing".

Collectivism results in an indirect communication style. Thoughts and feelings are concealed to maintain harmony in the group. Vagueness and indirectness put the emphasis on listening. Meaning is discovered in the interpretation, the nuances. Anticipatory communication is highly valued: others guess and accommodate one's needs without having to be told. A good communicator is someone who "hears one and understands ten". It is a high context style using a stratified linguistic code. The social situation is built-in and forms are followed during the communication. Innuendo and convention supply the meaning.

24

THE LANGUAGE OF HOME AND THE LANGUAGE OF SCHOOL

When the communication style of the home is different from that of the new culture, socialization can take as much time, effort, and understanding as acquiring proficiency in the new language.

Japanese mothers instruct their children in the intuitive, indirect communication style by often telling their children what others are thinking. By selecting the appropriate formula in the right social context, the meaning is understood by the listeners. Contrast this with an American health class that asks direct personal questions and shares intimate details regarding the personal lives of students.

Korean families, too, use the inductive style of communication. Main ideas are alluded to but rarely stated. This is a far cry from the American tradition of deductive logic that aims at presenting arguments in clear and precise language.

At home, Mexican Americans work collectively and collaboratively, so in Anglo school settings they may resist working individually. Their impulse is to share answers with others.

African American parents usually do not ask questions that their children know the answer to, so when these students encounter rhetorical, or information-gathering questions from their school teachers, they are often perplexed: "Why would an adult ask a child a question she already knows the answer to?"

There are several ways in which teachers can remove social and educational obstacles caused by varying communication styles:

Be tolerant of nonparticipation, realizing that socialization takes as long as language learning. There is a stage in the first few years of second language acquisition when learners can comprehend more than they are able to speak. Output is slow and hesitant. Listening and reflecting skills are developing even when students are silent.

Be realistic about students' grammar development.

Allow students to respond non-verbally, by pointing to a location on a map, adding something to a visual aid, or performing a calculation at the board.

Allow students enough time to give an answer. Wait three beats longer than you normally would after asking a question.

Use focus-of-attention words and phrases such as **all right, okay, now, so,** and **well** to signal successive changes in instructional activities.

Integrate new ways of learning with the student's past ways. Variability in your classroom structure will surely provide ways that are more familiar to the new student.

Have students work in small groups to complete certain collaborative tasks. Vary the composition of the groups often.

Help new students be aware of implicit rules for participation. Especially during the early stages, identify interactional prerequisites necessary for the new students to participate.

- State explicitly the implicit pattern of classroom participation, by writing instructions on the board or having a student summarize them orally.

- Discuss with the whole class and role play effective behaviors that help culturally different students understand   the values of American classrooms.

- Ask students to share with classmates how schools are organized in their own countries, how teachers teach, and what behaviors are expected.

Discuss the different types of questions used in class: discovery questions that allow the student to provide opinions and make guesses, and verbal review questions that require specific correct answers. When possible, tell students in advance what questions you will review with them.

3. PRESENTING CONTENT MATERIAL

Appeal to the learning style of the individual student. Discover what skills are strongest and use those to build developing skills. Make optimal use of the learner's way of learning.

Without restructuring course plans or classroom activities, establish the habit of repetition. A language learner needs to see everything, and hear it twice. Just because a student hears a phrase spoken and can reproduce the sounds and have a fairly good idea of what it means, it does not necessarily follow that he or she understands the structure of the individual words, or could use the phrase in another context. For instance, we can hear a beginning English student say, "This one is better" and assume that the whole area of comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs has been mastered. We should not be surprised when that same student cannot comprehend or perform statements such as, "The days are getting colder now."

Use plenty of visual aids and demonstrations.

Use modified speech effectively. Simplify communication, taking care that the meaning of the message is not changed.

Adapt assignments and grading systems for the first year.

Make lessons predictable by providing models.

Give language learners more time to prepare assignments.

Simplify assignments and transform the information into more comprehensible input. For example, language learners can translate and write sentences with a list of academic vocabulary words that other students are using in a slightly different context.

Select important vocabulary terms to teach as pre-lesson activities. Supply limited English proficiency students with vocabulary lists before classroom instruction and discussion of new material.

Encourage language learners to say, "I don't understand" when appropriate. When fellow students or instructor do not understand the student's response, restate the material, or repeat the student's answer to check comprehension. Add correct grammatical changes.

When eliciting in-class responses from language learners, phrase questions in the two simplest ways: either as choice questions, which contain the answer, or as factual recall questions, which require short factual responses. This gives them more opportunities for participation, without having to formulate long, detailed verbal responses.

Use Tutoring, Peer Tutoring, and Cooperative Learning to improve language learners' access to all academic subjects. The personal connections and individual attention that accompany one-to-one, work teams, and groups enable limited English proficient students to participate in classroom activities at an earlier stage in the acquisition process.

Announce lesson objectives and activities.

List and review instructions step-by-step.

Listen for the meaning in student answers. Don't be distracted by non-standard grammar.

Present information in varied ways.

Use summaries of what has transpired in the class to help students clarify what they should have learned. Students can provide these oral summaries of lesson content.

Analyze your classroom activities with a view to adapt, adjust, and extend classroom communication.

- Have students conduct review discussions in pairs. This provides the opportunity to formulate difficult responses in a less pressured setting, and builds valuable study habits.

- Use aloud reading in class so that language learners can hear the cadence of spoken English.

- Ask students to create scripts and dialogues to illustrate material.

- Use music and song that combines subject matter, language, and cultural information.

Help the language learner be part of the group. Language is above all a social process. In order to gain knowledge, new students must participate in interpersonal ways with members of the new culture. The classroom is the student's best chance of establishing interlocking social and academic skills.

4. ENCOURAGING LANGUAGE PRACTICE

Create activities that allow new students to utilize their interactional competencies. Design learning activities for student-to-student interaction.

Focus on the content of what the student says and respond to the meaning while modeling the correct form. Repeat what the student says, supplying the correct grammatical form.

Be aware of the student's current abilities and adjust the complexity of assignments to it.

Integrate study skills into content classrooms by showing students how to use outlines, timelines, Venn diagrams, and other graphic organizers.

Include discussion of student experiences. While introducing new topics in class, encourage students to share knowledge they may already have about the topic.

Use illustrations, maps, and photos. These serve as non-language-dependent ways of introducing students to the lesson topic.

Incorporate the Language Experience Approach. Students dictate a summary of an educational event, while a teacher or fellow students records on the board what the student is dictating. Students then organize the written ideas and make corrections.

Use Cooperative Learning Techniques. Working in small groups maximizes language and social development, and encourages higher order thinking skills.

Use Writing Center Techniques. Tutors, peer tutors, and other interested, trained staff participate in a program that offers one-to-one language instruction for specific writing assignments.

Special Techniques for Low Literacy Level Adults

Adult ESL students who lack reading and writing skills in their first language require a concrete, practical context for their language studies. Make use of the oral skills; a pattern of hearing and repeating builds a foundation for growth of existing skills.

Pre-beginning exercises introduce learners to basic listening and speaking skills such as how to tell time and comprehend price information.

Use video effectively by previewing the vocabulary, beginning with nouns and verbs and continuing to phrases and sentences. Then have students watch, listen, and repeat certain parts, imitating dialogues for pronunciation practice. At the end of each lesson, review new vocabulary. At first, offer less content, but more aloud practice and time for absorption.

Tell and read stories; this develops the ability to retain information through recall and summary exercises.

Use songs; they are easy to translate and to remember, and reveal the rhythm and cadence of English speech.

Help the students learn the names of things and how to comment on them. Give them opportunities to use their limited repertoires in diverse situations to build a body of narrative that they are comfortable with.

REFERENCES

103rd Congress. "Improving America's Schools Act: Title VII."

Ambert, Alba N., ed. Bilingual Education and English as a Second Language, A Research Handbook, 1998-1990. New York: Garland Publishing, 1991.

Brown, H. Douglas. Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1980.

Collier, Virginia P. "The Effect of Age on Acquisition of a Second Language for School". Washington, D.C.: The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, Winter 1987/88, Number 2.

Gardner, Howard. Frames of Mind, The Theory of Multiple Intelligences. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1983.

Hainer, Emma Violand, Barbara Fagan, Theresa Bratt, Laurie Baker, and Nancy Arnold. "Integrating Learning Styles and Skills in the ESL Classroom." Washington, D.C.: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, Summer 1990.

Holt, Daniel D., Barbara Chips, and Diane Wallace. "Cooperative Learning in the Secondary School." Washington, D.C.: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, Summer 1991.

Johnson, Karen E. Understanding Communication in Second Language Classrooms. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Milk, Robert, Carmen Mercado, and Alexander Sapiens. "Re-Thinking the

Education of Teachers of Language Minority Children: Developing

Reflective Teachers for Changing Schools." Washington, D.C.:

National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, Summer 1992.

Pinker, Steven. The Language Instinct. New York: HarperCollins, 1994.

Richards, Jack C. Error Analysis: Perspectives on Second Language

Acquisition. London: Longman Group, 1974.

Samovar, Larry A. and Richard E. Porter. Intercultural Communication.

Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1994.

Short, Deborah J. "Integrating Language and Content Instruction:

Strategies and Techniques." Washington, D.C.: National

Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, Fall 1991.

U.S. Department of Education. The Condition of Bilingual Education in the

Nation: A Report to the Congress and the President. 1992.

About the Author

The author is a language tutor for limited English proficiency students and adults in Summit County, and a college instructor of French, English, and Literature at Colorado Mountain College. Her teacher training seminar, **When English is the Foreign Language**, offers classroom teachers of all subjects training in the theory and practice of language instruction. Reader comments on this article are warmly welcomed by:

Joyce Devlin Mosher

P.O. Box 54

Breckenridge, Colorado 80424

Phone and Fax: 970-453-2297

email: overlode@overlode.com